The Wicked and the Wise

सुभाषितं हारि विशत्यधो गलान्
न दुर्जनस्यार्करिपोरिवामृतम् ।
तदेव धत्ते हृदयेन सज्जनो
हरिर्महारत्नमिवातिनिर्मलम् ॥

subhāṣitaṁ hāri viśaty adho galān
na durjanasyārka-ripor ivāmṛtam ।
tad eva dhatte hṛdayena sajjano
harir mahā-ratnam ivātinirmalam ॥

A charming wise saying passes down the throat, but not for a wicked man;[1] just as nectar is not for the enemy of the sun (Rāhu).[2] That very thing the good man holds in his heart; as Hari[3] holds (before him), a perfectly pure great (sparkling) jewel.[4, 5, 6]

- Bāṇabhaṭṭa. Kādambarī (Pūrvabhāga). Maṅgalācaraṇa v. 7 (circa. 7th century).

1. The man is "wicked" because his nature (the obstructed suṣumṇā stops the upward flow of vital essence) prevents him from absorbing or valuing wisdom, just as Rāhu can swallow the sun or nectar but cannot truly possess its light. The truth of these words simply pass through him (through the lower gate), like food swallowed without nourishment.

2. In Sanskrit mythological language this refers to Rāhu, the demon who periodically swallows the sun and moon during eclipses. The "enemy of the sun" (arkaripu) refers to Rāhu, the eclipsing "shadow" associated with the moon's node. In the Sekoddeśaḥ (this term denotes the eclipse principle and is also applied to the subtle channel called the Rāhu-nāḍī (identified there with the suṣumnā), whose obstruction blocks vital flow. The simile therefore suggests that a wicked man cannot truly assimilate wise speech, just as nectar is not properly available to Rāhu.*

> ** 48. The central (madhyamā) and right (savya) channels flow upward and downward, carrying the energies of Rāhu (moon) and Śukra (seminal essence). They possess the nature of emptiness (śūnya) and knowledge (jñāna), possessing the nature of the vajradhṛk mantra (of the dveṣa family [kula]) and the vajra of one's intrinsic nature of reality (vajradhṛṅmate).*
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> *49. Through the dispersal channel (viṇ-nāḍī) flows the path of the moon, and the solar (raviṇā) path carries excretory fluid (mūtravāhinī). At times of birth and death, during the equinox, or in states of passion, this nāḍī is influenced by Rāhu (rāhuṇā). The śukravāhinī nāḍī is a flowing river carrying seminal essence.*
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> *68. When the channels of the moon and sun (iḍā and piṅgalā) are obstructed, the channels of excretion (stool and urine) become blocked. When the channel of Rāhu (suṣumnā) is obstructed, the seminal pathway becomes blocked.*

3. Hari (हरि), from the root hṛ "to take away or remove", is invoked here in its fundamental yogic sense as that which removes the darkness of ignorance, bondage, and obstruction.

4. A wicked person merely swallows wise words without absorbing them, whereas a virtuous person treasures them deeply in his heart, like Viṣṇu cherishing a flawless sparkling jewel.

5. Reflecting the light of truth. I.e., the Cintāmaṇi, "wish-fulfilling jewel" held in front, delighting the mind.

6. Idiomatic Translation:

A pleasing maxim slips down the throat, yet not into the heart of a wicked man, just as nectar is not truly for the enemy of the sun. That very saying the good man holds in his heart, as Hari cherishes a perfectly pure and radiant jewel.

English translation, Śrī Maccidānanda Nātha (05/03/2026).